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DSSD CENSUS 2000 PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM SERIES #M-9

MEMORANDUM FOR

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Attention:

Management Training Branch  
Field Division

From:

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Subject:

Trip Report for the Observation of List/Enumerate in Maricopa  
County, Arizona and a Questionnaire Assistance Center in  
Phoenix, Arizona

**Observation of List/Enumerate (L/E) Operation**

On Thursday, March 23 and Friday, March 24, I observed List/Enumerate (L/E) in Maricopa County, Arizona. The trip did not work out exactly as planned because I was never able to see a housing unit get enumerated. However, I was still able to get a good feel for the type of conditions that enumerators had to deal with in some of the more desolate parts of Arizona.

I met up with the Field Operations Supervisor (FOS) for L/E on the first day. I was able to talk with her and get her views on how the field work was going. For the most part, she thought that things were working out pretty well although there were some concerns and frustrations raised from her field staff. A common complaint she heard from the enumerators and crew leaders was that there did not seem to be a way to fully canvass some of the blocks because of impassable roads due to washes, mountains, or gates. In many cases, the enumerators notified their crew leader (CL) of these areas, and the CLs would go back out into the field to recheck the roads for a way to get further into the block and check for units. In one specific area where there was knowledge of housing units, the roads were so bad that a CL had planned on saddling up a horse so that he would be able to enumerate the units. Since the method they planned was somewhat obscure, the FOS and CL had already been in contact with a television station to have them film the event.

In talking further with the FOS and a CL on that same day, I found that they were sometimes concerned with the well-being of their enumerators. This concern was probably reasonable considering that some of the staff was elderly, and they often had to deal with the extreme heat in the desert and also had to go into some problematic areas. In one particular case, they had planned on sending in a police escort with a crew of enumerators because there had recently been a triple murder in the area.

On both days of my actual observation, examination of the blocks to get a better feel for the land was the main thing being done. Most of these places were very mountainous areas in the desert. On the first day, I went out with the FOS and a CL in a four-wheel drive vehicle to look over a couple of blocks that enumerators were not able to fully assess because of problems. It took nearly two hours to get out to the assignment area, and then we drove further into some blocks to look for additional paths that could be traveled by the enumerator. In most cases, the enumerator had done as good a job as could be expected. We found, often times, that there just were not any roads that went further into the blocks. On the second day, I went out with an enumerator as he tried to figure out where some of his blocks started and ended. The drive to his assignment area took about two hours. The main problem for the enumerator in one case was that the block map appeared to have a road as a block boundary, but there was no name on the map or on the nearby dirt roads around the block. It was obviously very frustrating for the enumerator. An overall lack of named roads seemed to be a common problem in the area that he was working. The enumerator was relatively new to the area and had rarely been out to these remote areas.

#### **Comments on List/Enumerate**

- The FOS said that there were a few enumerators who, even after completing training, still had no clue that they would be required to enumerate extremely remote areas because this topic wasn't emphasized in the enumerator training. This was a problem because a couple of these enumerators decided to quit when they found out the large amount of driving that would be required.
- The FOS, CL, and an enumerator that I talked to all mentioned that the maps being used for the L/E operation were very poor. In several cases, they said that roads acting as block boundaries on the maps did not appear on the ground. Additionally, there were problems with block and/or assignment area boundaries which cut directly through a mountain.
- It was suggested by the FOS and CLs that the enumerators carry a pair of binoculars in their car when they go out to canvass their blocks. I can see how these would be very useful in helping to locate housing units with the vast amount of area that needed to be covered and the limited amount of passable roads.

### **Observation of a Questionnaire Assistance Center**

While I was in Phoenix, I was able to briefly see a Questionnaire Assistance Center (QAC) site. I went along with the supervisor from the Phoenix North LCO to a QAC that had been set up in a library. It was simply one person who was tucked away in a corner, but still somewhat near the entrance. There was a sign on the outside door of the library stating that this was a place to get help with questions on Census forms. As well, there was a sign inside pointing people in the general direction of the QAC clerk.

On the day that I visited, the clerk was almost ready to finish her shift. She had been there for eight hours and had filled out about ten D-399 forms during that day. The clerk, who spoke both Spanish and English, said that it had been one of her busier days. On each of the two previous days, she said that she had filled out only about half as many D-399s.

### **Comment on Questionnaire Assistance Center:**

- In talking to the QAC Supervisor, she said that when she received a list of eligible spots for QACs from the partnership specialist, many of them were not within the Phoenix North LCO area. Because of this, the supervisor was forced to find additional places that would be willing to be QAC sites with very short notice.

cc:

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